13. (Once Amended) A method for increasing a digital camera image capture rate, comprising the steps of:

capturing an image upon detecting an image capture request;

storing the image in a memory device;

repeating the capturing and storing steps if another image capture request is detected; [and]

performing image processing and compression on the image;

halting the image processing/compression step and returning to the capturing step if another image capture request is detected; and

resuming the image processing/compression step after the capturing, storing and repeating steps have been performed.

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69. (Once Amended) An apparatus for increasing a digital camera image capture rate, comprising:

means for capturing an image upon detecting an image capture request;

means for storing the image in a memory device;

means for repeating the capturing and storing if another image capture request is detected;[and]

means for performing image processing and compression on the image;

means for halting the image processing and compression means and returning to the capturing means if another image capture request is detected; and

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means for resuming the image processing and compression means after the capturing, storing and repeating means have been performed.

11/15. (Once Amended) A computer readable medium comprising program instructions for:

capturing an image upon detecting an image capture request;

storing the image in a memory device;

repeating the capturing and storing steps if another image capture request is detected; [and]

performing image processing and compression on the image;

halting the image processing and compression step and returning to the capturing step if another image capture request is detected; and

resuming the image processing and compression step after the capturing, storing and repeating steps have been performed.

Please add the following new claims 21-23.

21. An apparatus for increasing a digital camera capture rate, comprising:

an imaging device for generating raw image data responsive to an image capture request;

a memory buffer for initially storing the raw image data;

first routines for conveying the initially stored raw image data away from the frame buffer to a second memory location to provide space for storing additional, subsequently captured images;

second routines for processing said raw image data and for storing said processed image data; and

a central processing unit coupled to the imaging device and to the memory buffer, for executing according to a predetermined set of priorities the first and second routines;

wherein the first routines are assigned priority over the second routines to thereby facilitate the rapid conveyance of raw image data away from the frame buffer.

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22. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the first routines are configured to convey the initially stored raw image data from the frame buffer to a RAM disk.

23. The apparatus of claim 22, wherein the second routines include:

a routine for transferring raw image data from the RAM disk to a flash memory;

a routine for compressing raw image data;

a routine for storing the compressed image data in the RAM disk; and

a routine for transferring the compressed image data from the RAM disk to the flash memory;

wherein the routine for transferring raw image data from the RAM disk to a flash memory has priority over the routine for compressing raw image data, the routine

for compressing raw image data has priority over the routine for compressing raw image data, the routine for compressing raw image data has priority over the routine for storing the compressed image data in the RAM disk, and the routine for storing the compressed image data in the RAM disk has priority over the routine for transferring the compressed image data from the RAM disk to the flash memory.

94 cont.